DH

E/ECA/ICPP/90/29

UNITED NATIONS
Economic Commission for Africa

POPULAR PARTICIPATION
An NGO Perspective

by

Constantinos Berhe

LC/NAIROB

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA

12-16 February 1990
Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania

E/ECA/ICPP/90/29

UNITED NATIONS
Economic Commission for Africa

POPULAR PARTICIPATION
An NGO Perspective

by

Constantinos Berhe

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA

12-16 February 1990
Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

The very fact that there exists the need to discuss and come to some form of common understanding on the issue of community participation indicates to varying degrees, serious problems associated with pre-determined project ideas in development that are usually imported into vulnerable communities. Those usually result in raising promises and, more seriously, total frustration of communities to try another option.

This paper is a result of an effort to define community participation within the context of the non-government agencies and the development environment in Ethiopia. It highlights successful initiatives and some experiences gained in failed interventions.

When I was first asked to prepare a paper on "community participation - towards a common understanding" I thought of going through a cross-section of NGO projects and report on the success and experiences gained. This would have given the paper a wider base. The time I have for preparation this paper is so limited that it draws its cases largely from the Upper Awash and Chelekot Catchments Disaster Prevention Programme (UACC-DPP) and to some degree from two other projects.

UACC-DPP is a broad post-emergency intervention which aims at human and natural resources development. It is a programme that, in terms of focus and direction, was planned and set in the relief development strategy the Ethiopian Red Cross had charted out to implement a disaster management model of drought preparedness, relief action, recovery and long-term development to reduce vulnerability of famine victims in South Wollo - the base for the UACC-DPP.

Through measures encompassing environmental rehabilitation (soil water/vegetation), community water resources development, diversification of income in the household, improved tools and appropriate technology for sustainable food production and utilization, agro-forestry and enclosure, the programme deals in so many diverse ways with the improvement in the quality of life in rural Wollo and, therefore, enhancing traditional coping mechanisms with careful monitoring of the food, fuel and water crisis.

Other components of the intervention deal with the restructuring and improvement of the health delivery system, awareness generation and training in disaster preparedness and prevention, supporting the home economy through home gardens and beekeeping and changing the diet composition to include vegetables, fish and fruits.

Total development aid per capita is 17.5 birr annum for a period of five years (ERCS/UACC-DPP 1986-1).

THE DEVELOPMENT SETTING

Experience from many community projects has given way to the theoretical foundation for the thinking in sustainable development through effective community participation. We will, therefore, look into this issue to assist us later in the case analyses in popular participation and the environment that participatory development is set in.

1. Stakeholders in development

The learned and the experienced are tempted, almost always in good faith, to come up with ideas for pre-planned services in needy communities, to change the life of the poor

into some better quality of life that is not prone to disaster agents. In this process, it is very unusual to find only two partners, i.e., the community and the agency.

The reality remains that there are several stakeholders/interest groups in any intervention: first comes the beneficiaries of the project who are in principle the main actors in the whole process. Secondly, we have the agency that is directly responsible for releasing funds and governs the day-to-day work of the project. Thirdly, there are the governments that write and implement all development policies based on a specific ideology and finally the international donor system that provides the material, financial and human resources support. To complicate the situation further, we have multilateral agencies that represent donors in disbursing the funds according to specific donor requirements/agreements.

The stakeholders have their own interests to pursue and specific ideas to dictate to one of the other stakeholders in the intervention. It is amidst this struggle that participatory development has to be discussed and analyzed to create some form of common understanding.

2. Existing national policies

Policies of development, production, marketing, land tenure, taxation, privileged groups and the organization of the social structure have a big impact on the level of good-will that can be commanded from beneficiary communities. The very structure of communities, the degree and nature of private, individual and communal initiatives in increasing productivity, questions of equitable opportunities to development assistance, private co-operative marketing systems, tenure and property rights of communities/individuals/households, rights and utilization of open access and common property resources and rights of mobility and migration have significant impacts on development. (Costantinos, 1989)

Hundreds of stories could be told where policies or their misinterpretation could result in peoples' resistance to participate in their own development initiatives. A typical example of this is seen in an FTPP baseline study in Bededo PA in Ambassel, Wollo:

> "In 1982, the Bededo PA executive committee was told by the Woreda MoA office that, according to the law, all trees planted by individuals on their own land but outside the home garden, should be confiscated and made into the property of the whole PA. As a result a lot of small plantations were taken over by the PA both to generate cash and as building material. In 1988 one of the men approached higher authorities and asked that his trees be returned. The regional authorities conceded to his request and ordered the PA to return his trees." (Poluna, 1989).

3. Legitimacy of community leaders

The structure of a community can take several forms: indigenous organizational structures (tribal, religious, elected, edir, equib) political structures and mass organization who address specific sex or age group (Women's association, labour, youth and peasant associations). The most legitimate one of these structures are the most successful, so dependable and trustworthy that they can organize people for a purpose that is well-defined. Participation, therefore, assumes a very high degree of symbiotic relationship and the respect for the opinions and feelings of both beneficiaries and their

that is well-defined. Participation, therefore, assumes a very high degree of symbiotic relationship and the respect for the opinions and feelings of both beneficiaries and their supporters.

4. Flexibility of Financing Schemes

The problem that is most often associated with development workers' initiative to effectively stage the scenario for a participatory forum is the resistance of donors in providing adequate flexibility in the use of budget and the time allowed to spend it. A typical community project could take as much as four years just to negotiate the details of project implementation with the community and come up with a contract that governs the relationship between the agency and the community. Many instances could be quoted where the main concentration of project staff is the best use of funds before it 'expires'. In such a case, funds can only be 'misused' spent in unprogrammed initiatives just to show 'evaluators' that something has been done.

> A donor supported a primary health care initiative in Wollo and soon found out that the project staff were doing a series of community workshops in an effort to sensitize the communities on the nature of intervention. Auditors of the donor community came a year and half later and found out the health post has been constructed with community funds and local materials collected in the vicinity. They were told that the project has not spent any money on it, it was all a local affair. The clinic that should have been built six months back according to plan and budget was not even started since the infrastructure was not laid down to create a referral system. The auditors came up with their comments that the budget has not been strictly followed; 'but whose plans and budgets are we talking about' remarked a project officer.

5. Conservation of Natural Resources

Another important area that is of some concern in enhancing community participation is the work that is demanded of farmers and their families to undertake the task of conservation. Conserving a whole catchment unit is not an easy affair and to do any reasonable conservation work, it is important to do soil/water conservation works and revegetation treating a whole land unit. Unfortunately not all land units fall in one community. Here again the issue of the right to common access resources arises. There is no incentive for farmers to conserve the soil at the top of the catchment when they know that it is, to large extent, beneficial only to the farmers in the valley.

A. The fact that the returns from hillside conservation take a long time would not be sufficient incentive for investment even in labour and the opportunity costs become very high.

B. In a tradition where people are associated with the land, they do not usually and easily accept the fact that the land they are trying to rehabilitate is common land. They need to be given confirmation that this land belongs to them either as identified communities or individual households.

C. Conservation structures that are built in the farms (stone/soil bunds) in whatever form are very popular in the UMCC-DPP farming communities. Planting tree species in these bunds (agroforestry) also becomes a popular and established activity within farming systems once it is introduced. The fact remains that, unless people

are sure to keep the land for good and hand it over to their children. it becomes almost impossible for them to invest in any form.

D. Conservation work demands a lot of energy in earth moving and small-scale construction works. In some communities where food production is low. it is very difficult for the farmers to avail the necessary calories for such work. It is often the case that communities that have to work in intensive conservation activities also have structural food deficits: leading the way for projects like food-for-work and cash-for-work.

With such realities in the rural life. how does one go about encouraging a high degree of farmers' involvement in solving their own problems. It is this background that has created the need for a sustainable form of development which. in the longer term. could reduce the vulnerability of communities to food shortages and famine.

Issues in Sustainable Development

1. Tradition

   - Resistance to change traditions. cultures and attitudes
   - Lack of knowledge and experience
   - Ideals and ideology-diversity

Farmers needs to be articulated

2. National policies

   - Social and organizational policies
   - Property and tenure policies
   - Inflexibility

Farmers needs should be accepted as valid

3. Funds

   - Difficult to find
   - Earmarked committed in time and activity
   - Budget control

Farmers timetable. not agency's

4. Works (conservation)

   - Beyond the capacity of communities

- No motivation in the immediate future

5. Agencies

- Competetion for areas of influence
- Media needs/public relations blur objectives
- Low motivation in staff-benefits/autonomy

Source-partly taken from IRDP

6. The why and how of development aid

It is important that we understand the basic causes of underdevelopment in order to understand why many countries in the third world are threatened with famine and the unbearable quality of life their citizens are subjected to. We cannot entirely attribute the causes of this human agony to the forces of nature such as disasters much more than the failures countries have met with their socio-economic development policies and orientation of international aid.

The common understanding in the international development dialogue during the 1950s and 1960s that sustainable development can only be achieved through transfer of capital from developed to underdeveloped nations had not proved to live up to its promises. The significance given to better terms of trade and commodity grants in the 1970s could neither achieve the goal of sustainable development. Massive lending of funds for development in the 1980s have burden the new phenomenon of debt threat, which is leading to an unhappy end to the monetary era of development.

While all these have their relevance and importance in the development process, they remain to be only part of the means rather than the objective of development. This has yet, even today, to take into account the crucial aspect of the human factor in the development process. The central point of any development intervention is people, without whose potential development cannot be realized. (IFRCS 1985)

It is in this context that recent concern and frustration in supporting the ongoing development process is increasingly being oriented to different approaches that take the human dimension first and utilize the human potential that has been rendered inert by international aid for a long period of time.

Many NGOs are now involved in community-based development projects which appear to be the key to disaster prevention in the rural context. We term it "disaster prevention" because the nature of disasters in many poor nations has considerably changeed, both in terms of extent of destabilization and persistence, threatening the survival of communities. Any development intervention in this context is, therefore, a disaster prevention project, as disasters themselves are "essentially unsolved development problems". (Hasman et al 1982).

PARTICIPATION

Defining participation

What is participation? A recent rapid rural appraisal training session in the UMCC-DPP, Wollo, came up with the following consensus on the understanding of participation (ERCS, 1989):

- It is the interaction of people from different levels;
- It is a process of mutual decision-making;
- It is group-oriented;
- It is having the same goal;
- It is identifying and solving problems together;
- It is the basis for frank and open discussion;
- It is the basis for involving all concerned;
- It is changing ideas through discussion and understanding;
- It is working together.

From the above few points raised in the training session, it was concluded that participation is a high degree of democratic culture. It is not a venue for agencies to allow beneficiaries to participate in their own development but where 'outsiders' participate in local initiatives. The value of participation has been outlined in the same gathering:

- More sense of responsibility from all stakeholders;
- Success instead of failure;
- Talking with, not telling each other;
- Shared experience;
- Mutual co-operation;
- Grass-roots implementation;
- Flow of correct information.

In brief, the value of participation is to pave the way for sustainable development; it is an instrument to identify community capacities and vulnerabilities, a clear statement of the needs in a community and the cost of promises for agencies.

Measures of development

This section is not trying to deal with the whole issue of agro-ecosystem analysis but rather the indicators for monitoring and evaluating development interventions. Four major properties are outlined here:

1. Productivity: defined as the output of valued product for a FA per unit of resource input.

2. Stability: defined as the constancy of the productivity of the FA in the face of small disturbing forces arising from the normal fluctuations and cycles in the surrounding environment.

3. Sustainability: defined as the ability of a FA to maintain productivity when subject to a major disturbing force.

4 Equitability: defined as the evenness of the distribution of the productivity of a FA among its members. (FRCS/IIED, 1988)

It is important to note that maintaining a high degree of those measures will not only provide the fora for development, but also peaceful growth in a community without invoking problems of planned social change that can create privileged groups.

Step-by-step development

In an EARLY ACTION project in Hararghe which was designed to address beneficiary needs at the early stage of a slow-onset disaster, the community was requested to get organized and plan survival strategies. They got together and came up with a package proposal. It was implemented. The project succeeded in meeting its immediate objectives. Post-project evaluation showed that the intervention was clearly understood by the beneficiaries. Farmers requested the agency to assist them in other plans they have: tree planting around the homes with the provision of adequate water supply to the village.

THE AGENCY/PEOPLE NEXUS

The non-governmental agency perspective

Non-governmental agencies have taken the initiative of humanitarian support to the needy and vulnerable in many countries of the world today. They fulfil important tasks that governments and the private sector cannot accomplish. NGOs have become relief agencies, agencies of development, and more significantly they have also taken over the important task of mending the abuse on the environment and positively contributing to the conservation of world resources.

In the Ethiopian context, NGOs have played an important role in the massive relief operations of the decade, in what has been termed as the biggest peace-time logistics operations in recent history. Moreover, they have delivered food aid in a human manner with respect to all the dignities the human being demands. Further, NGOs have taken also the initiative to assist famine victims in the medium-term recovery and longer-term disaster prevention projects that are planned to reduce vulnerability to slow-onset disasters.

NGOs function at the grass-roots level and as such they have the clear advantage of delivering their promises directly to the people and often they command respect and trust of communities due to their previous engagement in emergency assistance. As the saying goes 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. Some of the set-backs of NGOs, if they could be called set-backs anyway, is the lack of experience in development work.

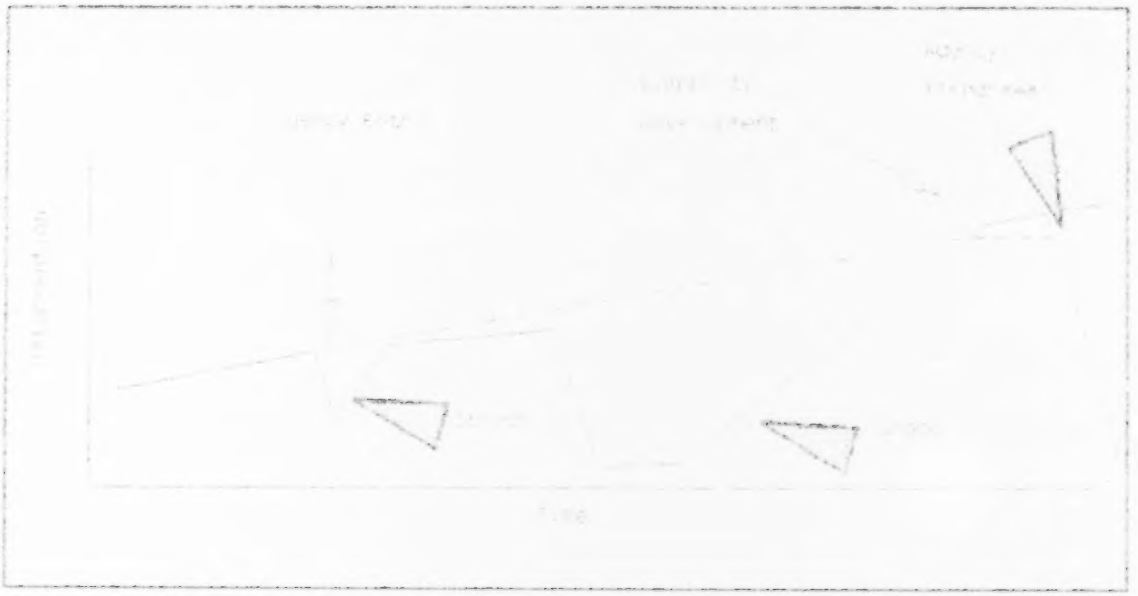

Fig. 1. Agency intervention in an ongoing socio-economic process

There is reason to believe that the lack of experience might actually be an advantage as this allows them to approach communities with the objective realities and not with preconceived ideas of the rural development package that is usually prescribed by 'development consultants' of the North. The technical know-how and the human resources component for development interventions (food production, water, health, nutrition, settlement, training, natural resources conservation and development) is relatively well developed in Ethiopia. These are services that can be, with a fair degree of success, employed within the country.

The problem comes with the approaches for the development of sustainable human livelihood. This is where private voluntary agencies have their strength, at least, in the good will they demonstrate to sincerely assist people towards development. This is the institutional experience that forms their strength, rather than the experience in the structured menu of development.

Agencies almost always intervene in an ongoing socio-economic development process, however insignificant, because development is a process of change that society goes through all the time (Alan Fowler, 1988). An almost typical intervention of NGOs is shown in figure 1. In the relief to development process, agencies intervene because of

a particular stress (failed rain or pest disease outbreak, etc.) or shock (famine, etc.). Emergency assistance is given to provide food, shelter and medical assistance. In this process, agency workers usually stress [illegible] development and recovery (forestry, agricultural rehabilitation, water [illegible] due to the emergency nature of their first intervention, they are carried away into development some succeed while others are usually dictated by prepared project documents that rarely address peoples' will. Most do not discuss the issue of withdrawal with the community and have no choice to come up with innovative community support schemes (such as an unearmarked rural development revolving fund) as they have already signed agreements with government which by and large decides on the modality of the intervention.

It is important to note here that the ideal relationship that could be forged between an agency and a community or a PA should include in its understanding:

1. Community/PA farmers inputs during pre-project period;
2. Community/PA farmers inputs during planning;
3. Community/PA farmers inputs during project implementation stage;
4. Community/PA farmers inputs during monitoring and evaluation;
5. Agency inputs during all stages;
6. A time table for agency withdrawal;
7. Initiation of a process for participatory monitoring and evaluation which take into account values of the beneficiaries, unintended effects, issues in sustainability, level of information needed - who collects and who uses it - which addresses the optimum level of ignorance and additional needs created due to the intervention (Johnson 1988).

While many agencies may be one or more of the above recipes for creating reaching understanding with communities, it is seldom that they could fully engage themselves in such agreements due to problems that emanate from the other stakeholders.

Training the key to sustainability

Many agencies in Ethiopia earmark substantial funds for the training of farmers and their development workers. The importance of training in the process of social change is thought to be the key to success. Indeed, training provides the forum for a more comprehensive understanding of the problems in rural development integrated disaster prevention. Experience in the world project has shown that training:

- encourages longer-term follow-up of projects by the beneficiary community;
- decreases the need for extensionists [illegible] development dependency on institutions and their project offices;
- plays an important role in developing sustainable structures in communities that are not aware of their problems, creating new sources of knowledge for the consumption of the rural sector.

– creates the forum for the dissemination of world experience in development, thus avoiding the need to start new research into a body of knowledge that exists already.

– becomes the main instrument for the devolution of decision making since beneficiaries will be armed with information and confidence to make viable decisions.

– can take the form of farmers workshops, meetings and other ways that encourage expression of feelings in communities and as such it stimulates people to respond to issues.

In response to this awareness some agencies such as the Ethiopian Red Cross have even gone to the extent of opening training and research centres – the Institute for Development and Disaster Studies and farmers training centre in rural Ethiopia such as the Bati Red Cross centre.

ATTITUDINAL AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

The initial reaction of farmers for these interventions was varied and different. In the case of the Ambo Micro Dam, farmers said they were involved "just because they felt the work can bring food for work and, after all, they may even succeed". The dam was completed before the rains and was filled with water where a 40 hectares irrigation is going on. The contact aware community needs to see to believe.

On the resources conservation side, pilot projects soon manifested what, in land-use planning terms, are called dead areas are actually important rainy season grazing areas and where the children spend their time growing in a social atmosphere their parents have grown in. The quick recovery of the hillsides that projects promise do happen; but the problem is that local people are not even allowed to think of this land as their land. It was, therefore, imperative to include peoples' interests. After one rainy season, farmers were allowed by the PA in co-ordination with the local DA to cut grass and take it home to feed their cattle. This proved to arouse positive attitude in the PAs. (ERCS, 1986). Problems of tree tenure, however, continue to remain a serious threat to the very core of the conservation philosophy (HED/ERCS 1989, ERCS 1988).

Values

	Agency	People
1.	Community inputs	opportunity costs
2.	Soil conservation	'work for food'
3.	Trees	income/nutrition/tenure-threat
4.	Hillside closures	less grazing land
5.	Improved agricultural practices.	risks/security
6.	Target groups	privileged groups

These are few examples of values that have different interpretations by the agency and the people who benefit from the project. Participatory monitoring and evaluation assists in setting common indicators (Fowler, 1988)

Irrigation using pumps is an easier affair to deal with. Farmers see the advantage immediately except for the fear that the pump might stop any time due to problems of spare parts. In Ardibo PA, not only did members decided to allocate sufficient money for the purchase of a new pump, but contributed sufficient labour for the gravity irrigation that was being constructed and at same time earmarked the cost of maintenance for the scheme from their annual income

It is against this background that contact awareness was found to be an easier medium to reach the farmers that could not have had any pre-disposition to certain points in the intervention. Further efforts at generating awareness cleared the way for farmer-farmer contacts and meetings organized informally and at the local level.

This is not to underscore the earlier stated hypothesis that "the people of Ambassel and Kalu did not know how to solve their problems" but to show the strength of an intervention that combines practical work, 'in-service training' and models in

development with intensive community sensitization. Farmers in the PAs are well aware of the factors that have made them vulnerable to disasters; what is difficult for them to conceive is how to reverse this process and put it to their advantage (ERCS, 1986).

An Afar pastoralist who participated in an experimental irrigated agricultural and grazing development remarked at a harvest which they first collected in recent recorded history:

> "The only reason that this experiment has succeeded is because you gave us what we think was a life-saving major-food when we needed it. Next you asked us what would be the long-term solution to the recurring problem. We told you to buy us animals that we lost during the drought. You were all happy with the response. Then came the idea of irrigated cultivation which some of our own members initiated. We were not sure of this, but we believed it was a genuine thing to do. For now we have succeeded. We hope the future will hold the same promises."

The Afar was right. For the moment he had succeeded. Later, when the success story was disseminated, the other stakeholders came to put their footprints in the project.

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Besides the more important attitudinal motivational factors, physical factors play an important role in the initiation of slow-onset disaster. The loss of top soil, vegetation, and water recharge capacity of the land create the chain effect in decreasing productivity and therefore the food available in communities. Table 1 shows the resources base of the entire UMCC-DPP project area. The land use/land cover map shows that 22 per cent of the area has been declared dead area that cannot produce anything and has to be left for regeneration, while the calculated forest area is less than 1 per cent. The carrying capacity of the area has been exceeded by over 100 per cent, allowing only half the current human and animal population to be supported by it at traditional yield/hectare figures. The ever-increasing population has created an imbalance against the traditional disaster preparedness recovery process. It was the background of this physical vulnerability that resulted in the following scenario in 1985:

1. 54 per cent of the area cultivated during normal rains has not been planted, with a loss of 79 per cent of the yield; 81.44 per cent of the people had no food reserve in their homes; 56 per cent of the animals were wiped out;

2. Emergency relief and food-for-work accounted for 34.8 per cent of the household income, making 285,000 people dependent on food aid. Some migrated to sell their labour, while the unfortunate had to face a reality they have never dreamt would come (ERCS/UMCC-DPP, 1986).

Table 1 Land use by cover

Total area	Cultivation							
Km²	Int	Mod	St	Grass land	Bush & scrubs	Wood land forest	Built up area	Lakes
444 9.5	905.9	848.5	589.3	138.4	1852.9	36.3	18.8	38.2
%	20	19	13	3	42	1	0.5	1

Given this reality: what were the capacities of the people that effectively led them to recovery and development? Weren't these same factors potentially there in the 1928 drought which did not result in disaster even when the project area never received any relief? Was the food-for-work, amounting to 2 per cent of the total production of the area, a factor in circumventing the disaster or did the project successfully achieve its long-term development objectives in a very short time? Or is it the case that the in-built preparedness recovery mechanism in communities were re-instituted to save the situation from creating a disaster?

The fact remains that communities have taken the benefit of 'external' inputs (FFW and development money) to enhance their traditional coping mechanism, but a major input is their own resource. This is where the attitudinal motivational capacities discussed earlier have successfully overpowered their vulnerabilities. The people in the project have used all available physical means to create an environment of survival despite the factors that could have been 'detrimental' to participation of farmers in their own work. Telling stories such as:

- 36.4 per cent of Gobeya PA has been under soil/water conservation treatment;
- 94 per cent of Bededo PA has received conservation treatment;
- More than 12 PAs had more investment and preparedness reserves incomes between 1986 and 1989.

The list could go on. The reality remains that farmers understand their benefits from an intervention, and wisely use what they feel is relevant. They also try to discourage agencies on issues they do not accommodate in a subtle way.

> Efforts were underway to introduce Sesbania sesban in farm terraces. They were proclaimed a success in three years. In the fourth year, farmers replaced them with pigeon pea, which provides food during slack seasons. The project had to accept this reality after all the the investment

Project planning methodologies

Project planning is to be understood as an ongoing, dynamic process that has to be refined at every stage of the intervention. It is of particular importance to a successful development initiative to respond to changing realities and beneficiary needs at every stage of the implementation process.

With the context of the UMCC-DPP, the objective situation and flexibility of fund utilization has resulted in several planning and design approaches that, step by step, address a more participatory way of planning. As described earlier, the first phase planning was not all done by the beneficiaries and their direct participation has been minimal due to the disaster that had occupied the minds of all concerned (including the beneficiaries) with the logistics aspects of relief.

The agency had, therefore, to use the following approaches and sources of information to start implementation:

1. The experience that the Red Cross had gained from a decade of almost continuous relief operation and nutritional monitoring in the area combined with the big Red Cross membership among the peasantry gave it sufficient access to the communities. This helped to set up the intervention in a USAID-funded recovery/rehabilitation which was limited to the distribution of tools, seeds, fertilizers and volunteer farmers' training. At this point, a lot of data started flowing establishing the objectives for the long-term needs which led to the pilot projects.

2. Following the pilot projects, a log-frame 'consultative' planning was used where information collection and collation took place from the following sources:

   - a 5-7 per cent structured questionnaire household survey;
   - a physical resources inventory using airphotos and Landsat false colour composites;
   - direct community/official meetings and workshops in the villages.

The log-frame approach resulted in a land and water development master plan for the area and a logical sequence of problem analysis was used to establish the goal, aim and expected results of the project, broken down into 12 components of activities.

This also assisted in setting up indicators for monitoring and evaluation with the means and sources of verification.

Due to the nature of its logical analysis and generalization, the log-frame approach cannot address the problems of rural peasantry in its holistic form. Local priorities, which could have been a source of motivation/inspiration, have been relegated to secondary position. Contradictions even came up on the interpretation of, for instance, the philosophy conservation.

STRUCTURED SURVEYS

The logical framework mode of planning depends on structured surveys based on questionnaires that have been designed by a multidisciplinary group of experts. These surveys take usual trends:

1. They are too large in volume and attempt to represent the information needs of every team member.

2. Survey results and analysis are not completed in time.

3. By the time the surveys are completed, if they are at all, the information collected becomes redundant due to changes in the regional economic realities.

"The pathology of rural surveys follows common paths. Its demands are not properly estimated. At the planning stage it is easy to expand the geographical area, number of samples, question to be asked ... The outcome is excessive data to collect and therefore less likely that the data will be collected, checked, coded, processed and analyzed and less chance of ... being written up, let alone being read and acted upon". (Chambers 1983).

This is partly true in the UMCC–DPP where 50 per cent of the data collected during project planning has never been compiled and written up due to lack of time and 'computer error' that demanded the coding to be done by hand. Project staff now refer to the other 50 per cent compiled and written to be used as baseline data. This is not even of great help as the data that has been completed during the 1984/85 drought did not simply represent the attitudinal/motivational factors. Although the questionnaire used had included questions about the drought, it did not leave adequate space for people to express their feelings that would have been the case with more intimate form of data collection.

"Writing a report, then, demands casuistry. Conclusions have indeed been arrived at, but they are based on anecdote, common sense, observations incidental to the survey ... Cosmetic surgery on the body of the data improves appearances; sloppy syntax slurs non-sequiturs; concluding paragraphs assert that the data showed or proved what careful reading would show they did not show, or prove, but which may be true nonetheless". (Chambers 1983)

3. Against this background, Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) methods were introduced which involve local people in project design and implementation. Here, projects that can be implemented by the farmers are identified and the role of the multidisciplinary team is seen as that of supportive and not leading in diagnosis, design and implementation.

> RRA methodology training has been an instrument in identifying important issues in sustainable development in the project. The institutionalization of this method as an instrument of analysis is on its way now. As this approach for rural appraisal is fairly new to our country's development planners I have included a background from one of the RRA reports from the project:
>
> "Rapid Rural Appraisal has been developed over the last ten years in response to concerns over the commonly encountered pitfalls in conventional approaches for rural research and development. The term RRA has now come to refer to a wide range of techniques and methods. Indeed not all RRAs are rapid, not all are restricted to rural situations, and not all are appraisals. There are several principles that illustrate the key features of Rapid Rural Appraisal. RRA should not be thought of as a pre-set methodology in package for-instead it comprises a series of **CHOICES** for any given situation. Investigators can thus select from a **"basket of choices"** according to their needs and experience. The process is **ITERATIVE** and is modified by the team as information is progressively revealed. Insights arise because of the **MULTIDISCIPLINARY** nature of the investigatory team. RRAs encourage team members to be **INVENTIVE**, and thus there is no standard procedure. The procedure is systematic and **SEMI-STRUCTURED**, whilst maintaining flexibility and adaptability. Accuracy is achieved through **TRIANGULATION**, which involves the use of diverse methods and information sources rather than statistical replicability. Unnecessary detail is avoided through **OPTIMAL IGNORANCE**, and the key trade-offs between precision-breadth-depth-timeliness are made explicit through **APPROPRIATE IMPRECISION**. Finally it is recognized that investigators interfere, and RRAs thus attempt to make **BIASES EXPLICIT**.
>
> Rapid Appraisals can be carried out in order to provide **EXPLORATORY** information about an area, or be focused on a particular **TOPIC**. A central principle of RRAs is that they are **PARTICIPATORY**. That is they attempt to develop a dialogue with local people during the research process and that they encourage local people to be involved in the **PROCESS** of research and project planning. RRAs are therefore best carried out by and with **LOCAL PEOPLE."** **(ERCS/IIED, 1989-3)**

One essential element of RRA is that it has to be followed by implementation immediately. The UMEC-DPF has the advantage of available resources to follow up the initiative with action. In this process, however, how many donors would avail funds without going through the long approval procedures they have. NGOs can have a clear advantage here when they have the flexibility even to use relief funds for development.

4. Besides these approaches, topical issues have been investigated by specialists on issues that need further technical investigation. Titles include:

- Risks, trees and security - a base line study of a peasant association;

- Pest management
- Farmer-oriented research
- Seed multiplication and cleaning
- Horticulture studies
- Policy issues in tree growing
- Workshops on peoples participation - policy and the human dimension in rural disaster prevention
- Hillside closure management
- Towards a qualitative change in forestry
- Hydrological studies
- Initiation of a process for monitoring household food and fuel consumption
- Air photo analysis and training
- Information management systems

Information management systems

Management here does not refer to the 'Project Manager's' office. It refers to the entire process of managing the implementation of a project by all the stakeholders of the intervention. Managing information is part and parcel of the implementation process. Information on activities, socio-economic changes and impacts is an important tool in any project. All stakeholders have different needs for information. It is for this reason that an agreed information management and reporting system should be created.

Usually too much information is thought to be useful and delivered to the donor community. On the contrary, it discourages people from getting information because of the lack of clarity. On the other hand, beneficiaries receive scant information for purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

One area of interest - in this case analysis - is that several meetings with all stakeholders have come up to create a data base management system that caters for the information needs of donors, government agencies, agency Headquarters, project staff, development agents and beneficiaries.

- Donors receive quarterly financial and activity reports which highlight major works completed, problems encountered and lessons learned. Monitoring reports by donor representatives are also sent regularly and when requested.

  Reporting in foreign language is one of the most time-consuming tasks of project staff. The fact that a special monitoring team compiles monitoring

reports releases project staff to their routine work thus makes it easier to refine their intervention.

- All others receive monthly reports that contain all works done and the experience that has been gained.

- Project staff get all reports including area-specific information on design and technology which is theoretically used for participatory monitoring with communities. The last aspect has still to be developed as the level of participatory monitoring has not been encouraged by the constraints mentioned in the introduction.

The complexity of the project in terms of area coverage (5000 km2), beneficiary population (400,000 people) and 12 components of activities make information quite complicated at the donor, government and agency level. For the development agent and the beneficiaries, however, this cannot be cumbersome as they share information right from its source.

Information as a tool for participatory monitoring and evaluation

The principal means of verification for the monitoring and evaluation process is information. It is transferred to the users in the form of training and workshops to the farmers/peasants and to some degree the project staff, and in the form of reports to the other stakeholders.

Information that assists the process of diffusion of knowledge/ knowhow/feedback usually comes from the following sources that have been discussed earlier within the context of the paper in different sections:

1. Research results that have their sources within the trials of the project and farmers experience in improved agricultural practices, hillside closures, irrigation, agroforestry, hybrid quality in animal resources development, modern bee-keeping, fisheries development, settlement patterns and environmental conservation works.

2. Consultancy reports detailing/articulating specific problems and recommendations.

3. Project reports that are produced in regular intervals.

4. Surveys findings from structured and rapid appraisal investigation.

5. Outside information-meteorological, policy, funding, and regional economic data such as marketing and environmental concerns that are beyond the 'borders' of the community. Useful visits from policy-making bodies also provides an opportunity for farmers to present some of their queries.

4 MANAGING INFORMATION FOR DIAGNOSIS AND DESIGN

Different stakeholders have specific information needs that cater to their interests as mentioned earlier on the information distribution of the case we have seen in the UMCC-DPP. The most important one is the feedback that is provided to the beneficiaries

to assist them in monitoring and evaluation. We have already raised the importance of articulating the expressed/felt needs of farmers. It is equally important that farmers achievements be articulated into comprehensible reports that could be used to create further understanding of the software aspect of the intervention. This is a fundamental point of departure if farmers are going to come up with innovative designs of their own.

For this purpose an information system development is crucial. The collection, compilation and utilization of information can take the following milestones:

A. Acquisition, compilation, storage and retrieval of information.

B. Information flow to the different stakeholders.

C. Dissemination on new technology transferred to the community and the institutionalization of the same in daily project work.

D. Information for trouble shooting (Raintree 1988).

2. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

A, B and D of the above can be structured within the information system with a fair degree of ease. The dissemination of new technology and diffusion of this technology/research finding, however, needs to be well defined in space and time. The methodology could take several forms. As I said earlier, in need aware communities who have been pre-disposed to the specific type of technology in question, verbal transfer of the innovation could serve the purpose.

In other cases where contact awareness is expected to play the major role, the communication between the researcher/project expert and the farmers working together as a change agent/prime mover do not only take a two way contact but one with three ways contact, where they both exchange information with the technology itself (Raintree 1988).

> "In building it and modifying what they have built they transfer information from their minds to the material world outside, increasing its negentropy or information by structuring formless matter into artifact with form and function. If we think of this as input, then the output is the information received when contemplating the technology. The creation of such artifact has the element of feedback and may be thought of as an extended dialogue ... The use of technology itself as a medium of communication can be extremely important when, for some reason, direct verbal communication is difficult. Communication about emerging technology can, therefore, be accomplished by 'showing' rather than 'telling' or 'explaining'." (Raintree 1988)

The communication medium is, therefore, not a prescribed form of knowledge transfer but specific to the prevailing cultural, attitudinal and traditional values which people follow and understand.

> As this paper was under printing a new directive that will strengthen forest development in general and community forestry in particular has been issued by the MoA. The context of this directive is set in providing communities the right to development and utilization of forests in their vicinity. It will

undoubtedly, have a big impact on the possibilities for the mobilization of the rural/urban poor to protect, manage and wisely use forest resources as this was one of the most significant hurdles to the fair distribution of the benefits of growth. (MoI Letter No. 89-525-69-119, Dec. 10, 1989).

DISCUSSION

Participatory culture is not something that agencies of development and environment can impose on people. It may impose because many societies have values they have lived with for centuries, long before development and started Freaking. This can not be changed in a short period of time. Education and human resources development at the grass-root level is a necessary precondition for successful intervention that should be sustainable in the long run with minimal inputs from outside.

From the case studies that we have seen above, there tried to be brilliant successful interventions despite the inherent problems stated earlier. This setting, however, is misleading if we see it only from one perspective. The communities that have been presented have gone through disasters not be ever thought possible. The need to overcome this series of disasters is most apparent here than in communities that live in abject poverty but do not experience the horrors of mass death and migration.

Important lessons have been learned from the case histories presented here. Problems have been confronted at every stage of the intervention. Major problems are still being tackled and addressed at every front that is available. Some of the problems however will remain unsolved as long as the situation that created them still exists. In connection with this it would be done a disservice to the power of the unbridled system discussing some of the pertinent issues in sustainability today.

1. The unfortunate need of prescribed development has become an unfortunately kind that at times means people sacrifice if it is worth participating.

2. Some [illegible] have become so dependent on development that even if it is small that were [illegible] started ongoing schools such, it is not unusual to see agencies fighting for areas of influence in some communities.

3. The withdrawal of agencies from a certain area, as stated earlier is a necessary condition to ensure sustainability. This relationship with many agencies and people will perpetuate their presence in communities to keep themselves employed.

4. The emphasis on a shortfall inputs in project development is the most costly part of the process when delivered. True, some inputs are an important part of the intervention, but often it is proved that they were not necessary.

Big tree nurseries and [illegible] component of forestry programmes. They look like oasis of greenery in the devegetated landscape that are the targets of the forestry interventionists. If we [illegible] the roots, the kind of management structures that are laid down, one can correctly the amount of forest will that one to be delivered to these nurseries and the survival rate one would logically think that peasant nurseries managed by local people and seeded with material selected by the farmers themselves are a more sustainable alternative.

7. Development is a process of change but a slow one. This concept has been proved the hard way in the cases we have seen. Donors and policy-makers are impatient. They are ambitious, they want to see quick results and they always like to hear what they feel is right.

> Interventions therefore, create their own contradictions at every stage and it is the resolution of the contradictions that makes development a worthwhile challenge.

8. On a final note, I would like to briefly deal with the issue of relief-development that is in vogue in NGO circles. Many agencies implement a relief action and then move to disaster-prevention programmes which are independently planned, due to reasons well out of their control. Disaster responses should be actions that are closely co-ordinated in a continuum.

Disaster preparedness, relief action, rehabilitation, recovery and disaster prevention are all looked at as unilinear, independent and mutually exclusive projects/programmes, while from the outlook side, the relationship between all forms of disaster response can and should be seen to be dialectical in nature. One can, in other words, address the issue as new development forms structures growing out of (or negating) the old in a process of developmental change (Constantino, 1988).

In this continuum a high degree of beneficiary involvement is required because agencies have neither the capacity nor the qualification to essentially that the process always take its natural course.

REFERENCES

Cuthman, A., in Anderson M.B. and Peter Woodrow (1989). RISING FROM THE ASHES, DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN TIMES OF DISASTER. Westview Press. UNESCO. Boulder, San Fransisco, Paris.

Chambers, R. (1983). RURAL DEVELOPMENT, Putting the last first. Longman. New York.

Costantinos Berhe. (Dec. 1984). PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION MEASURES. Paper presented to the National Conference on a Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Strategy for Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.

Costantinos B. (1989). POLICY AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION IN RURAL DISASTER PREVENTION. Draft for publication.

ERCS (1986). UPPER MILLE AND CHELEKA CATCHMENTS DISASTER PREVENTION PROGRAMME Vol. I, II, II. ERCS. Addis Ababa.

ERCS. (1985). PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISASTER PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM. ERCS. Addis Ababa.

ERCS/IIED (1988). RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL, A CLOSER LOOK AT LIFE IN WOLLO. IIED. London.

ERCS/IIED (1989). PARTICIPATORY RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL IN WOLLO, ETHIOPIA. Peasant Association planning for natural resources management. IIED Sustainable Agriculture Programme. London.

Fowler, Alan. (May 1988). EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS: TOWARDS A COMMUNITY BASED COMPARATIVE EVALUATION. AFMEMP Workshop. Kisumu. Kenya.

Hagman, Gunnar et al. (1982). PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE. The Swedish Red Cross Society. Stockholm.

Johnson, Kristen. (May 1988). SOME THOUGHTS ON FARMER EVALUATIONS. AFMEMP Workshop. Kisumu. Kenya.

Raintree, J.B. (May 1988). FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR AGROFORESTRY EXTENSION PROJECTS. AFMEMP Workshop. Kisumu. Kenya.

Abbreviations and acronyms

DA	–	Development agent
USAID	–	United States Agency for International Development
MoA	–	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	–	Non-government organization
PA	–	Peasant Association
PC	–	Producers co-operative
SC	–	Service co-operative
ERCS	–	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
IIED	–	International Institute of Environment and Development
UMCC	–	Upper Mille and Cheleka Catchments Disaster Prevention Programme
FTPP	–	Forests, Trees and People Programme (SIDA/FAO)
IRDP	–	International Relief Development Project (Harvard)